

M. MICHAEL ROUNDS
2418 Whispering Shores Drive
Fort Pierre, SD 57532

December 12, 2018

South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles
P.O. Box 5911
Sioux Falls, SD 57117

To the Members of the Board,

While I was Governor, Joaquin Ramos was granted a commutation of sentence as recommended by the Board in July 2008. As a result of the commutation being issued, Mr. Ramos' sentence was commuted from life in prison to 150 years.

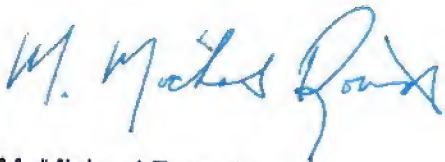
As I have disclosed to the Board in a previous correspondence from January 2011 (enclosed), the victim's family members did not have the opportunity to share their views on a potential commutation of sentence before the commutation was granted. The notifications from the Department of Corrections victim notification system were not received by the family members.

I had the opportunity to visit with several of the family members while I was still Governor. The family members expressed concern of the potential threat Mr. Ramos would pose if granted parole. I believe the preferences of the victim's family members should be given strong consideration. As I wrote to you in my January 2011 letter, "Had I had this information at the time I was reviewing his request, my decision would have been to deny his request for a commutation."

Therefore, I write again to you today as you consider parole for Mr. Ramos. I do not support Mr. Ramos being granted parole.

Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts.

Sincerely,



M. Michael Rounds
U.S. Senator

Enclosure



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
M. MICHAEL ROUNDS, GOVERNOR

January 7, 2011

South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles
P.O. Box 5911
Sioux Falls, SD 57117

To the Members of the Board,

On December 28, 2010, Joaquin Ramos was granted a commutation of sentence as recommended by the Board in July 2008. As a result of the commutation being issued, Mr. Ramos' sentence was commuted from life in prison to 150 years.

Shortly after the commutation was issued and filed with the Secretary of State, this office began to receive information from the victim's family stating they did not support Mr. Ramos receiving a reduction in his sentence. As more information was shared by various members of the family, it became evident that some of the family would feel threatened if Mr. Ramos were ever granted parole or released from prison. Had I had this information at the time I was reviewing his request, my decision would have been to deny his request for a commutation.

While attempts were made to contact those who were identified in the victim notification system, it is my understanding, some of these individuals did not receive the notice sent to them. As a result, I do not believe the Board had an opportunity to hear this testimony when they made their decision to unanimously support Mr. Ramos' request in 2008.

On January 7, 2011, I met with three members of the victim's family. After hearing their heartfelt testimony, I shared with them I would contact the Board and advise the members that, in this particular case, I do not believe the victims have had an opportunity to share their views regarding this matter. I am requesting the Board listen to any input the victim's family may be willing to share during future parole hearings involving Mr. Ramos and consider their views when deciding if Mr. Ramos should be granted parole. Additionally, I am sending documentation to the Board, which was shared with me by the family at the January 7 meeting, in order that this may be considered by the Board at Ramos' parole hearings. Based on the additional information that has been shared with me, my recommendation to the Board is, parole not be granted to Mr. Ramos.

Sincerely,

M. Michael Rounds

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